

Basic Detail Report



00011582

Title

ADA on Sydney Harbour

Date

c 1920

Primary Maker

William James Hall

Medium

Emulsion on glass

Name

Glass plate negative

History

ADA is a William Fife III designed and built schooner that has had a long association with Sydney. The schooner was commissioned by Sir Alex MacCormick, a Sydney surgeon who was prominent in the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron and then the Royal Prince Edward Yacht Club. It has taken part in the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race winning line honours on more than one occasion. When the vessel was launched in 1924 it was named ADA. The carvel planked hull was 73 feet long on deck and about 86 feet overall including the bowsprit. Sir Alex MacCormick was a very experienced yachtsman. He had purchased the racing cutter THELMA, a Walter Reeks design, in the mid-1890s and won many races with it, then later commissioned MORNA, a Fife designed cruising yawl built in 1913 by Morrison and Sinclair at Long Nose Point, Sydney. ADA was his third and final yacht. Sir Alex MacCormick had a thriving medical practice in Sydney, but often returned to the UK. In 1928 he sailed ADA out to Sydney via the Panama Canal with only a small crew. It was an uneventful voyage other than sitting out one gale as they avoided a cyclone off Fiji, and on arrival in Sydney they remarked how well the ADA performed at sea in all conditions. ADA then became the flagship for the RPEYC and along with BONA (later BOOMERANG) the two schooners were the envy and admiration of yachtsmen on the harbour. After WWII ADA was sold to Bill Stuart, who changed the sailplan to a Bermudan rig in 1953. He entered the boat in a number of inshore yacht races where it was successful, winning the Duke of Gloucester Cup, Gascoigne Cup, Revonah Cup and Norn Cup. Stuart then sold it to Peter Warner who owned the yacht from 1960 to 1965. He renamed it ASTOR after the brand of his household appliance company and skippered it in the annual Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race. ASTOR won line honours on three occasions in 1961, 1963 and 1964. ASTOR also raced in the 1961 Trans Tasman race from New Zealand to Australia, and the 1963 Trans-Pacific race from Los Angeles to Hawaii. The yacht was sold to an American buyer in 1965, and changed hands again in the USA in 1987. New owners in 1990 gradually restored the boat with a thorough programme that covered the entire structure, fitout and rig. Once completed in the mid 1996 ASTOR was again in superb condition and is considered to

be one of the finest examples of an existing Fife yacht. ASTOR is now used for cruising in 2006, and has spent considerable time amongst the many Pacific Island groups. On two occasions ASTOR has again returned to Sydney Harbour, using it as a base to spend the summer period.